

Summary and Analysis of Data from Indiana's ACF 812 Report for March 2011

Section 812 of the Claims Resolution Act of 2010 requires each State to submit a 'Report on Engagement in Additional Work Activities.' The report must be submitted for two reporting periods. The first reporting period is from March 1 through March 31, 2011 and the reports are due no later than May 31, 2011. The second reporting period is from April 1 through June 30, 2011 and the reports are due no later than August 31, 2011. For each work-eligible individual (WEI) in a family receiving Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) cash assistance during the reporting period, States must collect and report the following information: (1) whether the individual engaged in any activities that are directed toward attaining self-sufficiency and (2) if yes, the specific activities that (a) do not qualify as a countable work activity, but are otherwise reasonably calculated to help the family move to self-sufficiency or (b) that could be a countable work activity, but for the fact that either the WEI has not engaged in such activities for a sufficient number of hours; the WEI has reached a maximum time limit allowed for having participation in the activity count; or the number of WEIs engaged in such activity exceeds a statutory limitation.

Summary

When Congress created TANF in 1996, one of its goals was to ensure that families getting cash assistance received help in attaining self-sufficiency. Congress established the 'work participation rate' as the tool to measure whether or not a state meets this goal. Each State must meet an overall participation rate of 50% and a 90% participation rate for two-parent families or be subject to a financial penalty. The work participation rate focuses on 'work eligible individuals' and whether or not the WEI is engaged in specific work activities.

A 'work eligible individual' is an adult (or minor parent head-of-household) recipient of TANF cash assistance or a non-recipient parent living with a child receiving cash assistance unless the parent is:

- a minor parent, but not the head-of-household;
- a non-citizen who is ineligible to receive assistance due to his or her immigration status;
- a Supplemental Security Income (SSI) recipient;
- a parent providing care for a disabled family member living in the home; or
- a parent receiving Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) benefits

For a WEI to count towards the work participation rate, the individual must have verified participation in countable activities for a specific number of hours each month. Parents with children 6 years of age and older, must participate in a countable activity for 30 hours a week for each week they are receiving a TANF benefit. Parents with children under 6 years old must participate for 20 hours. Families with two parents must participate an average of 35 hours a week.

Countable work activities are limited to:

- Unsubsidized employment;
- Subsidized employment;
- Community work experience;
- Community service;
- On-the-job training;
- Vocational education/training; and
- Job search/job readiness

WEIs with a 30 hour requirement must participate in the above activities for at least 20 hours and then also participate for 10 more hours in the above and/or:

- Job skills training;
- Education directly related to employment; and
- Satisfactory attendance of Secondary School/GED

There are limits to how long an individual may be engaged in vocational education (twelve-month lifetime limit) and job search/job readiness training (limited to six weeks in a twelve-month period.) Because Indiana meets the definition of 'needy state' under 45 CFR § 260.30, the job search/job readiness limit increases to twelve weeks in a twelve-month period. There is an additional limit for job search: an individual's participation in job search/job readiness does not count for a week that follows four consecutive weeks of job search/job readiness activities.

All other activities are considered 'non-countable'.

In March 2011, Indiana had 6,774 WEIs actively participating in work activities. 2,721 individuals had enough activity hours to meet the TANF work requirement. 4,001 had activity hours but not enough to meet the work requirement. 301 WEIs participated in a countable work activity that did not count toward the work participation rates because the hours of participation in the activity were beyond a statutory limit for reporting the hours of participation as countable work activities.

Analysis

In March 2011, there were 20,873 work eligible individuals associated with Indiana's TANF cash assistance program. 6,774 individuals actively participated while 14,098 had no activity hours.

Employment is the primary focus of Indiana's TANF program, and the data produced for this report reflects that emphasis. For the majority of individuals meeting the work requirement, employment is the primary work activity.

Employment	68.6%
Attendance of Secondary School/GED	11.2%
Community Work Experience	10.3%
Vocational Training	7.5%
Job Search/Job readiness	2.0%
Other	0.4%

For individuals with countable activities not meeting the work rate, employment is still the primary activity.

Employment	54.9%
Job Search/Job readiness	29.5%
Vocational Training	7.6%
CWEP	5.5%
Attendance of Secondary School/GED	1.4%
Other	1.1%

Individuals with no activities fall into two broad categories: those required to participate in work activities and those not required to participate by state or federal regulation. 'Engaged' includes individuals in the sanction process for failing to participate.

Engaged But No Activity Hours	45.6%
State Exemption/Federally Disregarded	36.7%
Not Engaged	10.0%
Other	7.7%

'Engaged' is further broken down as follows:

Family's First Month of Assistance and No Work Activity Assigned	30.3%
Individual Assigned to a Work Activity That Has Not Yet Begun	40.7%
Individual in the Process of Being Sanctioned	29.0%

The majority of 'Exempt/Disregarded' are due to illness or disability.

Federally Disregarded	31.2%
Single Parent with Child Under Age 1	3.8%
Exempt Due to Illness or Disability of WEI	37.3%
Exempt Due to Illness or Disability of Child/Other Family Member	10.6%
Short Term Good Cause	6.5%
Other State Exemption	10.6%

Narrative of Most Common Activities Not Counted Towards the WPR

301 work eligible adults participated in countable vocational training or job search/job readiness work activities that did not count toward the work participation rates because of the restrictions to these activities. 270 individuals had hours in job search while 31 had hours in vocational training.

Uncountable job search/job readiness activity hours resulted from case managers scheduling job search along with other countable activities to emphasize employment or the case manager failing to assign the individual to other work activities.

Individuals with uncountable vocational hours are attending school part-time and participating in other activities while going to class. Most individuals have been attending classes on and off for several years. In the spring of 2010, the Division of Family Resources implemented a new case management system to track assigned work activity hours and participation. Unfortunately, information of prior months of vocational training was not loaded into the new system. As such, case managers were unaware that the individual has exceeded the twelve-month limit. Production of the 'Report on Engagement in Additional Work Activities' brought this shortfall to light.

All individuals identified with uncountable vocational training or job search/job readiness hours will be assigned countable work activities within the next 30 days.